



SAMDRUP JONGKHAR INITIATIVE

DEWATHANG, SAMDRUP JONGKHAR

REPORT ON ORGANIC STUDY TOUR TO INDIA SPONSORED BY SAMDRUP JONGKHAR INITIATIVE, DEWATHANG, MARCH 21, 2011 to APRIL 9, 2011, AND FUNDED BY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE, CANADA.



Prepared by Cheku Dorji

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, international awareness of the extensive environmental damage caused by intensive industrial agriculture has led to the realization of the need for re-establishing and mainstreaming ecologically sound farming systems.

As such, Bhutan has recognized that conventional agriculture threatens our health and food security in the future. In recent years, low cost organic agriculture—which was the traditional system of agriculture in Bhutan—was re-introduced and now some parts of Bhutan have embraced it once again.

Recently, a civil-society based project to develop Samdrup Jongkhar dzongkhag in southeastern Bhutan in an ecologically friendly way was initiated by Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche in Dewathang, Samdrup Jongkhar. The initiative was officially publicly launched on 18th 19th and 20th December at the Chokyi Gyatso Institute for Buddhist Studies as the “**Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative**” (SJI) in the presence of His Excellency Prime Minister Jigmi Y Thinley, who was the keynote speaker at the launch. The project mainly focuses on fostering GNH-based ecologically friendly development in Samdrup Jongkhar and infusing intrinsic values of GNH into the development process. It is also aimed at increasing living standards in the dzongkhag and improving self-reliance and food security. In line with these aims, Low Cost Organic Agriculture is being introduced in some places, and further encouraged in places it already exists, and training support in that direction is being given to the underprivileged farmers of the Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag.

To further these goals, the SJI sponsored a three-week organic farming study tour to the northern part of India for a representative group of 19 practicing farmers from all gewogs in the dzongkhag—generally two from each gewog—plus three Samdrup Jongkhar Agriculture Extension Officers as well as the Dzongkhag District Agriculture Officer. In addition, one private Organic Farm Manager from Toktokha, Punakha, and a Vegetable Growers’ Group leader from Tsirang Dzongkhag were sent by the National Organic Programme from Thimphu. The tour commenced from 21st March till 9th April, 2011.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY TOUR

- Training on Organic Farming and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) at Navdanya Organic Farm at Dehradun, India
- To see the dire effects of conventional farming and cost of high agricultural inputs on farmers and their families in Punjab
- Learn new farming and land management practices
- Interaction with the farmers of different levels and villages and sharing of experiences
- New ideas on organic marketing
- To see organic farm cooperatives that specialize in successful value-added production in Ranikhet, Uttaranchal.

- Learn about the post harvest technologies adopted by the farmers of Tilwara and Sauri village, Uttaranchal.
- Learn about group formation and how the groups work for the benefit of the farmers in the areas visited
- Get an overall concept of organic and sustainable farming methods in India

3. LIST OF STUDY TOUR PARTICIPANTS

Sl. No.	Name	Gender	Age	Village	Gewog
1	Sangay Thinley	Male	35	Chenary	Dewathang
2	Rinchen Wangmo	Female	31	Domphu	Dewathang
3	Tshering jaipo	Male	30	Bangtsho	Dewathang
4	Tulsi Devi Rai	Female	22	Samrang	Samrang
5	Birkha Bdr. Powdyel	Male	39	Langchenphu	Langchenphu
6	Sonam Yeshey	Male	30	Jampani	Langchenphu
7	Thinley Zangmo	Female	20	Martshalla	Martshalla
8	Laxmi Narayan Bandari	Male	33	Kharpandi	Pemathang
9	Tendy	Male	56	Beldara	Pemathang
10	Sangay Lhamo	Female	22	Tsangchuthama	Phuntshothang
11	Karma Tenzin	Male	44	Upper Khamaethang	Phuntshothang
12	Sarada Pokhrel	Female	21	Lower Khamaethang	Phuntshothang
13	Namtong	Male	38	Mandangri	Wangphu
14	Kinga Wangmo	Female	30	Orong	Orong
15	Karma Choden	Female	20	Phajugonpa	Lauri
16	Kinzang Dorji	Male	49	Momling	Lauri
17	Tashi Norbu	Male	29	Gomdar	Gomdar
18	Sonam Yangki	Female	28	Brongshing	Gomdar
19	Sonam Jamtsho	Male	35	Monmola	Serthi
20	Wangchuk	Male	29	Extension Officer	Phuntshothang and Samrang

21	Sonam Dorji	Male	26	Extension Officer	Langchenphu
22	Tenzin Dema	Female	24	Extension officer	Dewathang
23	Tashi Dawa	Male	35	DAO	S/Jongkhar
24	Cheku Dorji	Male	26	SJI Staff	Dewathang
25	Chisato Maeda	Female	28	SJI Researcher	Japan
26	Rinchen Dorji	Male	55	Farm Manager	Toktokha
27	Lhakpa Sherpa	Male	58	Farmer	Tsherang

4. STUDY TOUR SCHEDULE and BRIEF REPORT

21st March-22nd March, 2011

Delhi via Guwahati: Early morning departure (by 3.30 am) on 21 March from S/Jongkhar to Guwahati, where the team took a train to Delhi. All the participants were first timers travelling by train and so it was a new experience for all of us. By mid-night of 22nd March 2011, the team reached Delhi and stayed the night at the International Youth Hostel, reaching there around 1:00 am. Pema Wangchuk, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche's representative in Delhi, kindly made all the train and bus arrangements for our group, and arranged our accommodations in Delhi.

23rd -24th March 2011 (Visit to Punjab)

Delhi to Churalkala Village in Punjab: We arrived at Churalkala village around 3:00 pm on 23rd March and toured the village, which has been and continues to be highly affected by chemical use in agriculture. One farmer said "Better to commit suicide than not to use chemicals." At one time, the village was one of the highest agriculture producers of India. But due to the heavy use of chemicals over time, the soil had become dry and unproductive. On the same day we also visited Balran village, which is one of the largest villages in that area. They had a recent farmer suicide case in that village on 10th March 2011, less than two weeks before we arrived. The victim was:

Name: Bal Bdr. Singh

Age: 35

Total land: 3 Acres

Reason for suicide: No profit

Three members from Bal Bdr Singh's family had already committed suicide before him, and he had even attempted to poison his wife. He ingested a pesticide spray. That night we stayed at Red Star Hotel in Punjab.



Govind Pura Jawharwala village in Punjab: The next morning on 24th of March, 2011, we were met by Dr. Vandana Shiva, and together we visited Govind Pura Jawharwala village. Dr.

Vandana Shiva thanked our farmers who travelled a long way from Bhutan to come to India. She also spoke to the Punjab farmers about the purpose of our visit to their villages: “They don’t want to make the same mistake as the farmers of Punjab and so they are here to see with their own eyes.” During a question and answer session with the farmers from three villages, the following were found:

- Agricultural production is decreasing due to excessive use of chemicals
- Farmers cannot stop using chemicals because that will result in a drastic reduction in production, and then an inability to repay loans.
- The cost of input /chemicals is rising every year and their income is falling behind; more expense on input than profit from output.
- With high debts to be paid to the stakeholders, some farmers opt for suicide, and at present about 12 farmers have already claimed their lives just from the three villages we visited. Due to excessive use of chemicals, their drinking water is also not safe and some farmers told us that as a result they purchase mineral water for drinking like the tourists.
- As a result of the use of carcinogenic pesticides, the Punjab now has a “Cancer Express,” a train that travels regularly to hospitals and is filled with cancer patients and their families.
- When their drinking water was tested, there were 40% chemicals present in it.
- Except for some kitchen gardens for home consumption, there is no organic based farming
- Each farmer cultivates 20-30 acres of land on average.
- Too much is being taken from the soil and nothing is being returned to it.

On the same afternoon of 24th March, the team travelled to Dr. Vandana Shiva’s project — the Navdanya Farm (called Bija Vidyapeeth)—at Dehradun. On the way the team noticed the piles of cow dung mixed with wheat straw to form pancakes left to dry — these were to be used as fuel for cooking in those regions.

25th March, 2011

After the registration there was an orientation and tour of Bija Vidyapeeth — the Navdanya organic training farm — and an overview of organic farming. After lunch, the team was taken around the farm fields and visited the labs, seed bank and also the ready-made Vermi-compost; while at the same time a lively discussion was taking place about the organic fertility management system and the farming techniques in use at the Navdanya farm.

Farmers were told that a practical education in organic farming, by actually working in the field, was much more valuable than a paper certificate.

During their next ten days in the Dehradun area, the Samdrup Jongkhar team was brilliantly, warmly, and graciously hosted by Dr. Vandana Shiva, D.S. Negi and Dr. Vinod Bhatt (who conducted farmer trainings in Samdrup Jongkhar in December, 2010), and by the whole Navdanya community and its organic farming experts, scientists, and farmers.

26th March, 2011

The Samdrup Jongkhar team had a class with Mr. Sri Hari Raj Singh, a Navdanya soil scientist. He taught the group about the relationship between soil, the living organisms in the soil, and human beings. “If you want something from the soil, then, give something back,” he said. “This is the basic principle of life and everybody does the same within our human kind,” he said. The team was taught about how to differentiate the various soil types, and what the basic needs of soil are, and they also learned about soil sampling.

During the afternoon, the Samdrup Jongkhar team learned about composting and underwent some practical field training on soil fertility management, including when and how compost should be applied for best results in light of different plant growth stages (see below). The team also picked Chamomile flowers for use in making herbal tea.

This training included the following specific instructions that were practiced in the field:

COMPOSTING DIRECTIONS:

Composting is the process of transforming organic plant and animal material into humus:

1. Collect plant material
2. Chop plants into smaller pieces
3. Place hard plant material at the bottom to provide for proper drainage
4. Pile chopped plant material into layers of 10-15 cm
5. Apply moderate amount of liquid cow dung over each layer
6. Do not press over heap
7. Turn the heap once a week.

After the heap turns into compost, spread it and let it dry for few hours.

Benefits of Composting:

- It increases soil organic matter and the ability of soil to retain moisture
- Improves nutrient content in acid soils
- Provides the right proportion of nutrients



27th March, 2011

There was a presentation in the morning session by Dr. V.P. Uniyal of Navdanya on the *Role of Pollinators in Organic Farming*. There was also a slide show showing the useful insects on the farm, which are spared and able to survive and provide benefit when pesticides are not used. In the afternoon the team learned about Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Every evening, there was a video shown regarding the effects of pesticides/ chemicals. Tonight it was the *Toxic Tears of Punjab*

28th March, 2011

Journey to Tilwara in the hills above Dehradun, to learn about the local community farming in that region and about the farmers' groups they have formed there. On the way, the group visited the Tehri Dam site.

The Tehri Dam was built below one of the old villages/towns known as Tehri. Later the accumulation of the dam water submerged the whole village and town. Hundreds of farmers had to leave their homes and they were shifted to different places, where they had to change their culture and farming systems. Today they are still living a nightmare due to the loss of their traditional farm lands and ancestral homes.

The main purpose of the dam was to produce electricity for the city of Delhi and also to provide that city with water for household uses other than drinking water. The Tehri Dam has caused so much land degradation and erosion on the sides of the slopes, and the sight of the area now submerged under water is unimaginable. To illustrate the massive size of the dam, it previously took about 10-15 minutes for villagers to travel from one side of the river to the other. But now it takes almost 2 hours to travel the 40 to 50 kms around the dam, at a cost of approximately 60-70 rupees.

All the farmers in our group were alarmed to see such damage being done, and in the near future, if the dam by any chance bursts due to earthquake or other structural damage, then millions of people in settlements down the shores will be washed away.

29th March, 2011.

The team visited Sauri village, under Rudrapur District, Gharwal region. It has nice scenery with stone slab roofs and well terraced fields, which was the most interesting part for our farmers because we have only limited terracing in Samdrup Jongkhar, and because D.S. Negi of Navdanya has advised us to use more terracing to prevent vital nutrients being washed down our hillsides. The farmers in Sauri village have made use of even very small plots of land by terracing. The people there are simple and most of the men work outside the village (except during field preparation), while the women work both in the fields and at home.

The women have formed a cooperative group called Chetarapal group, which was started in the year 2010. They so far have only nine members out of 35 households in the village. They have so

far limited the size because the cooperative is still at an initial stage. The group collects old cloth and makes cloth bags for sale at the local market. Some also sell vegetables and cereals. Every month when the group meets, they collect 20/- rupees each as group money to cover collective costs.

Another group, started in January in a nearby village named Rajrajeshwari, mainly focuses on the sale of organic vegetables. These villages have not used chemicals for 8-10 years. They grow a wide variety of crops, including lentils, grams, and ginger. Commercially, they don't have any fruit crops. The group here contributes 50/- rupees every month during their meeting.

Our farmers were given hands-on training in making Rhododendron juice without any chemicals or preservatives. This juice can be very useful on the farms during the early spring to quench farmers' thirst, particularly during the start of their farming season. It is also in the spring when the nearby forests have Rhododendrons in full bloom (especially the common red).

30th March, 2011

Departure from Tilwara to Dehradun via Devprayag. The downhill drive for almost two hours was breath-taking. Thehe (translated as "beautiful terraces") and villages were nestled upon the hillsides and the meandering river flowed down the valley. The team could also see the eco-tourism spots near the banks of the Ganges River. The long sand beaches were very inviting as well. However time and tide waits for no one and we have miles to go before we sleep.

The team arrived at Dehradun by 4:00 pm in the afternoon and was given time to rest, wash and get ready for dinner. It was early to bed because our Navdanya visit coordinator, D.S. Negi, announced that there was a heavy day ahead.

31st March-1st April, 2011

These two days were dedicated to learning through practice about organic manure preparation. During the first day, the Samdrup Jongkhar group prepared Panch Ghavya (using the five main items produced by a cow) and the Ghana Mirt. The details for preparation, as we learned it, are given below:

Panch Gavva

1. 5kgs of fresh cow dung
2. 5 liters of fresh cow urine
3. 2 liters of cow milk
4. 2 liters of curd
5. 500gms of ghee
6. 500gms of honey/gur
7. 1kg of banana



Thoroughly mix the ingredients and keep in a cool dry place for 12-14 days, stir thrice a day.

- Add 200 liters of water to the mixture and apply in a field of one acre size before you plough the field for soil fertility.
- Make a ratio of 1:3 with water, and spray on the crops to prevent insect and pest infestation.

Ghana Mirt

1. 10kgs fresh cow dung
2. 10 liters of fresh cow urine
3. 2kgs pulse powder (dal)
4. 1kg jageri/gur
5. A handful of soil (well pulverized soil)



Stir the above mixture thrice a day for 5 days and it is ready for use in the field for fertility, insect/pest control, and some disease control as well. It also controls weeds to some extent. The best time to use it is right after the 5 days. It should not be applied during rainy season.

During the second day, the team was making Vermi-Compost. The participating farmers were learning with full interest, and the first thing they wanted to do when they got back home was prepare these organic manures. Some farmers had even brought some earthworms (good for Vermi composting) back with them, but unfortunately some of these died on the way home.

Vermi Composting

1. Collect cattle dung and break it into smaller pieces
2. Pour dung into open surface container and wet with water
3. Add around 500 earthworms per 50 kg of dung
4. Cover with wet bags
5. Keep container protected from sun and rain
6. Worms multiply
7. After 45 days it will be ready.



The benefit of Vermi Composting is that the earthworms do all the work: making compost by eating the organic materials and producing excreta rich in nutrients.

2nd April, 2011

Thanks to the kind and thoughtful consideration of our Navdanya host, D.S. Negi, this day began with a very interesting visit and then, to everyone's surprise and delight, turned into a sacred pilgrimage day for the Samdrup Jongkhar team.

During the morning the team visited the Forest Research Institute in Dehradun, the second largest such Institute in the world. It was constructed between 1923-1929 for a cost of 90 lakh only, and it covers an area of 7 acres in the Greek/Roman style. The surrounding area covers 500 hectares. Inside this campus is the Indira Gandhi Forest Academy, State Forest Service, Forest University, etc. Degree certificates are awarded here.

The building has six museums inside as follows:

1. Forest Pathology Museum
2. Social Forestry Museum
3. Silva culture Museum
4. Timber Museum
5. Non Wood Forest Product Museum and
6. Forest Entomology Museum.

The team visited all the museums and the campus with awe, but didn't forget to grasp any useful information to take back home.



After the FRI visit the Samdrup Jongkhar team visited the Mindrolling Monastery located in nearby Clement Town. The team was lucky to get the blessing from the Khenchen Rinpoche and also to visit the inside of the big stupa, which actually is generally not allowed for most people. A Bhutanese monk who had been at the monastery for the last five years said, “Till date, I have never been given a chance to visit the stupa inside; thanks to you all, that I could visit with you after five long years.” So, the team was more than lucky as well.

An additional surprise for the farmers was the Tibetan dish being offered in the Tibetan Bazaar. It reminded us of a Bhutanese dish which we have missed for so long. After the visits to the FRI and the Mindrolling Monastery—in the scorching sun—our team was tired. By the time our bus reached the hostel at Bija Vidhyapeeth at Navdanya, all the team members were sound asleep in their respective seats in the bus.

3rd April, 2011

This is our last day at Navdanya. In the morning the team visited the seed bank at the farm and was briefed in detail on how to select and store seeds. Some of the important tips are as follows:

- If you use a tin container for storage (which we often use in Bhutan), you lose your seed viability due to an imbalance in moisture content. That is because the temperature outside directly affects the container, which in turn affects the seeds stored inside.
- When you store your local seeds, dried Lauka ('koo' in Bhutan) containers are best. Seal the opening with cow dung mixed with husk of rice or wheat. Even after 3 to 4 years, your seeds will have 100% germination.
- Glass containers are also excellent for seed storage.
- In order to store oranges for a longer shelf life, you can put them in the Amaranth seed container; the oranges will still be fresh after 15 to 20 days. This is due to fact that the tiny amaranth seeds give more aeration and keep the oranges cool. Try putting your hand inside the amaranth seed container and feel the difference.
- Ashes, blue pine cone powders, saw dust, and dry chili powders can be used for seed storage.

- Turmeric powder or salts put in small porous bags can be put in the layers of seeds for longer storage.
- Any seeds should be stored 4 to 5 inches below the lid to avoid any direct effect from temperature and moisture outside.
- Camphor tree leaves or cinnamon leaves crushed can be used to protect against aphids, white flies, or smaller insects.
- Neem cakes or the leaves of Neem control termites and white ants.
- Bees travel up to 8 kms from the hive in their search for nectar.

In the afternoon the team was given an opportunity to learn to cook some organic foods, and surely our next-of-kin in Bhutan are now most likely to taste some delicious organic food in their lives.

During the late afternoon, we had a feed back and wrap-up session. All the staff involved in the training of our Samdrup Jongkhar study group was present, and those staff members are as follows:

1. Sri D.S.Negi (Organic Team coordinator)
2. Dr. Vinod Kumar Bhatt (Director, Bija Vidyapeeth, Navdanya)
3. Sri Jeetpal (Asst. Coordinator)
4. Sri P. Kimothi (Asst. Coordinator)
5. Sri Hari Raj Singh (Soil Scientist)

During the feedback session the members of the visiting Samdrup Jongkhar team were encouraged by the Navdanya staff to air their doubts and concerns where necessary, and similarly the Navdanya Coordinator and the Director did the same, being very honest about the challenges ahead. “Don’t go home with doubts. If you do, then there is no meaning in visiting Navdanya” said Mr. D.S. Negi, who had been with the team from the start, like a guide and host.

The main concern raised by the farmers was: “We need someone from the SJI office to follow up with us on this training (— particularly the composting methods). Otherwise we will forget or we will make mistakes, because most of us cannot read and write.

So, the day ended early with farewell speeches from the Director and the Coordinator. The Dzongkhag Agriculture Officer expressed his sincere and profound gratitude and offered his deep appreciation to the Navdanya organization in helping the farmers of Bhutan learn and experience the organic way of living. All the participants from Bhutan individually thanked the Navdanya staff and organization in helping them in every respect to learn and take the precious knowledge back home so they could put it into practice.

4th April, 2011

The day began early in the morning as the team prepared to leave the Navdanya premises, and nobody wanted to say goodbye to the wonderful people we had become attached to. We bade farewell to our friends in Navdanya and moved on with our journey to Ranikhet. We arrived there late in the evening and were met by Mr. Kalyan Paul, the coordinator of the Umang NGO.

5th April, 2011

The day's program started with the orientation to the Umang NGO. This cooperative deals with marketing of organic hand knitted woollens, natural fruit preserves and pickles, seasonal honey, and other foods. There was a presentation on the Forest, Water and Livelihoods of the Gagas River Basin, Almora District, Uttarakhand. It was all about how the Umang NGO took the initiative to restore and restructure the depleted environment around the basin. The NGO had formed self help groups in afforestation. The local youth are trained in simple masonry and carpentry to help the communities and are addressed as barefoot engineers.

After lunch, the group was taken to the Dhusat area, and to a village known as Malagoan under Dwarahat block, Amora District. There the team met with the Jai Maha Kali Group (Natural Resources Management Group). The group was formed in the year 2000. They have a very strong group management system. In every monthly meeting the members contribute 100/- rupees for the group and at present they have savings up to Rs 120,000/- and in the previous years they had even distributed Rs 8,000/- each amongst the group members. To date they had planted around 2,000 tree seedlings around their village, and within ten years they have seen their long lost spring waters flowing again. The water pumps, which previously had to be dug down 20 to 25 feet, are only dug 10-15 feet now, which indicates that the water level has risen due to good plantation. They are going to plant more trees and in the near future they want to have a rich forest around their villages.

It was truly inspiring for us to see and learn how ordinary villagers can take such wonderful initiatives by themselves to improve their environment and their lives, and also how local youth can take on such interesting and meaningful work, which can prevent the tendency to rural-urban migration.

In the evening the Samdrup Jongkhar team was divided into groups of two to four members, and each small group was directed to put up shelter with a local village household for good personal experience sharing. Every team member had their positive share of good experiences to talk about the next morning.

6th April, 2011

The team travelled back to Umang and had a wrap up session and discussion, in which we had a good chance to talk about what we had seen and how we could use the example of such local cooperative group efforts to improve our own lives back home. After lunch the team was taken around Ranikhet town for a bit of a shopping spree. We spent the night at Hotel Royal Mountain in Ranikhet.

7th, 8th, 9th April, 2011

Return Journey to Bhutan via Delhi. On the 7th of



April the team left Ranikhet for Delhi and in Delhi we were received by Pema Wangchuk (Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche's representative in Delhi), and by Ashish Gupta of the Organic Farming Association of India, who had come to Samdrup Jongkhar from 17-28 February to help train our farmers.

Pema and Ashish divided us into two groups and took us to a shopping complex and for dinner. We took more than 2 hours to go around, and after that we went to train station and back to Bhutan on the 11.30pm train that night. On 9th April 2011, around 7.30 pm we entered the Bhutan border check post and spent the night in Samdrup Jongkhar town.

The next morning, on 10th of April 2011, all of us gathered together and briefed the farmers about their role and responsibility after going back to their respective villages. Farmers were time and again thanking the SJI and Rinpoche for giving them the opportunity for such a wonderful life experience — one which many of them had never even imagined.

5. CONCLUSION

After 20 days of study tour to Punjab, Navdanya farm, and Ranikhet in India, our farmers got a wonderful exposure to new ideas, which will encourage them to work harder and with much greater knowledge in improving their organic farming methods and their lives. For example, in Ranikhet, they saw how farmers there have not spared even a single plot of land without terracing to retain the soil nutrients on the slope. One farmer from Dewathang said “As far as I know, most of the cliff land is uncultivated in our place and most of our people don't do terracing, and I think that is why soil nutrients are washed away during rainy season.”

Overall, the farmers on this study tour got a great exposure to a lot of new experiences and new techniques of farming in a variety of places. Specifically, in terms of organic farming training, farmers learned how to make Panch Gavya, Barmi Wash, Ghana Mirt, and Vermi Compost at Navdanya organic farm. One farmer from Phuntshothang Gewog said “This training gave me lots of encouragement to work as a farmer and now I am very much proud to be a farmer.”

The organic study tour to India provided a mixture of everything. Not only did it provide information and training about organic farming, about cooperative formation, and about the impacts of pesticide use. It was also a great cultural exchange between two countries and we were there representing our country, Bhutan. Most of the farmers who were on this study tour have not even been to Thimphu, and so it was shocking for them to witness the huge city of Delhi. Indeed, everything was a new experience for them, and they have been enjoying the new charm in their life. One farmer from Wangphu said: “I am very much thankful to Rinpoche and to the SJI for giving this opportunity to people like us which I have never thought of.”

Prepared by: Cheku Dorji